



It does my heart good to sit and write a SPRING newsletter article. I love the spring and the newness of life it brings after the winter season here in Wisconsin. Soon we will be enjoying warmer temperatures, sunny and stretched out days, and signs of growth and colors all around. It seems we are all approaching this spring with a new perspective than years past, and I hope you are able to fully take in and enjoy the things about the season that bring you joy and rest.

We have so many things we are looking forward to offering you in the coming months, and you will find many of them in this newsletter! You can find our full calendar of events right on our website now at [www.wisapsp.org](http://www.wisapsp.org), so I encourage you to check that out as well as [follow us on Facebook](#). There are always new webinars, virtual groups, and activities taking place that are such a great opportunity for connection and support.

We are especially excited to be able to offer some additional fun family events around the state through the generosity of **Jockey Being Family!** Some of these events will take place in the summer, and others later into the fall. In addition to these events, Jockey Being Family will also generously be providing a number of hotel rooms AND a family pizza party at our

annual conference in Wisconsin Dells, **A Place In My Heart!** Save the date for this special event to be held on Saturday, October 30<sup>th</sup>.

This year we are happy to announce that our speaker will be **Bryan Post** from the Post Institute. Registration will open this summer. As always, please feel free to reach out to me personally if I can help connect you with resources or supports. I always love hearing from you and welcome your feedback and ideas.

Take care,

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Check out the photos from winter events. Baby it was cold outside, but family fun was still to be had! These photos are from the Snow Daze Event

that was held at the Schiltz Nature Center on Saturday, January 16th. Check out the other event photos in this newsletter! Also check out this quarter's virtual and in-person events. Mark your calendars for upcoming conferences! Call your local WISAPSP specialist to learn more about the resources available to you and your family. We are here for you!





## In Case You Missed It...

On February 27th, approximately eight adoptive and guardianship families attended a day of tubing at Trollhaugen Outdoor Recreation Area in Dresser, WI.



The event was initially scheduled for earlier in the month, but was rescheduled due to the severe cold weather. It turned out that the weather in the end of February was perfect! Families were able to tube down their pick of five different lanes on the hill and could even chain together to enjoy the ride down as a group. A big thanks to the families who attended! Keep your eyes open for more outdoor family fun events to come!



In January, families braved cold weather to enjoy Wildcat State Park with their family. There was much fun and exploration in the snow.



On Sunday, January 31, our Family Hike at Blue Mounds State Park needed to be cancelled due to snowy and icy conditions.

Fortunately, families were mailed the state park pass, bird feeder craft, snacks, hot cocoa & marshmallows they would have received at the event. While being indoors during

the cold weather families enjoyed their snack and special time together making their bird feeders.

Families will also be able to enjoy visiting state parks throughout the year during the pandemic.



Here is some feedback from families about their care packages:

*We just got your package, and I want to thank you again for all the goodies! It made my girls' day :) They are looking forward to making the bird feeder over the upcoming frigid weekend, and are sure to enjoy the hot chocolate!*

*Thank you so much for the super fun bag of goodies! It will help us survive the coming bitter cold weekend and the critters will appreciate the feeders! What a great idea!*

## Don't Worry...There's New Activities Coming Up!



## Meet New Staff Member - Christy Timm, a Greenfield Area Specialist

Introducing Christy Timm, our new Support Specialist in our Greenfield office.

I have always lived here in Wisconsin. I grew up in a rural town southwest of Madison, spent many years in Milwaukee, and recently settled in the Wind Lake, WI area with my husband and dog

Winston. I attended UW Milwaukee for my Bachelor's degree in Sociology with an emphasis in Urban Studies, and I also earned my Master's degree at UW Milwaukee in Counseling. Previous to working with Wisconsin Adoption & Permanency Support, I worked as a school counselor at all age levels, but primarily with elementary and middle school children. Working with children from a variety of ages, backgrounds, and circumstances led me to be passionate about

being trauma-informed and child-centered. I enjoy working with families, and being able to support them in meaningful ways. Prior to my career as a school counselor, I also worked for six years at Columbia St. Mary's as a Nursing Support Coordinator. Both fields allowed me to help others receive holistic care by making sure their physical and mental health needs are met, and I am eager to continue this work with Wisconsin Adoption & Permanency Support as well.

### **NEW TRAUMA-INFORMED VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUP FOR ADOPTIVE AND GUARDIANSHIP PARENTS**

**MEETS 3RD MONDAY OF EACH MONTH AT NOON**

**REGISTER ONLINE AT [TISUPPORT.EVENTBRITE.COM](https://www.eventbrite.com)**

**WITH QUESTIONS, PLEASE EMAIL [INFO@WISAPSP.ORG](mailto:info@wisapsp.org)**

A group especially for parents who are:

- Parenting youth with trauma histories.
- Parenting youth with challenging emotional/behavioral challenges and/or diagnoses such as RAD, DMDD, & ODD



### ***WISAPSP Family Highlight - The Sells Family.***

Our adoption journey began over 30 years ago. Early on in our relationship, my husband and I always spoke of adopting a child, regardless of our ability to conceive on our own. We dealt with a decade's worth of stress and heart break related to infertility but realized that perhaps it was God's plan all along for us to adopt. The transition to initiating the adoption process was an easy one and after 2 years of prayers and waiting for God's plan to be revealed, we received the phone call that changed our lives for the

better. We were matched with a 2 day old baby girl. Ten days later we held the most beautiful baby girl in our arms and were able to fly her home to be ours forever. Raising our daughter has been our greatest blessing. So much so that we knew we wanted to adopt another child. As the years passed, we were recertified 4 times with our agency, each time, widening the age range of a child, to best match the age of our daughter. Almost 15 years passed and we had all but given up on the dream of growing our family. In fact, we recertified "one last time." Finally in 2017, on a day we discovered we were about to make a cross-country move, we received the phone call. We were matched with a 10 year old boy. We started the process over, in order to certify with our new state, and then 5

months later our family of 3 flew across the country to meet our son. The weekend was filled with adventures, laughs, and hugs when we said goodbye. Four months later, we flew to bring him home. "Party of Four" - this may seem like a simple statement for most families but after years of hoping and praying, this is something our family can finally say! A special thank you to Heather and the Wisconsin Adoption and Permanency Support Program. It is comforting to know we have support and resources to help us on our adoption journey. Our entire family enjoys the social events and activities. Thank you to WISAPSP for always being there for us and for helping us to build more precious family memories."





Spring is around the corner (fingers crossed) and I know I am excited for warmer weather and seeing the beauty of new growth in nature. I love seeing buds on the trees, feeling a warm breeze as I take a walk outside, and just the feeling of spring in the air. Winters can become cumbersome in Wisconsin, and the first signs of spring are something I get excited for each year, especially this one.

Spring is also the perfect time to consider starting a garden with your child/children. Whether you want to grow vegetables, fruit, or pretty flowers, growing a garden has many benefits for your child. It is a way that you can spend time with them, and strengthen your bond together. From picking out what you want to plant and where, to tilling the dirt, picking rocks out, planting the seeds, watering the plants, and

decorating the outside, it is something that you can do together every step of the way.

Not only does it strengthen your bond, it also gets them outside! After the long winter months, getting outside for fresh air can be so rejuvenating for you and your child. With so many children doing virtual school, it helps get your child away from screen time and out in nature, playing in the dirt and running around, which is childhood in a nutshell.

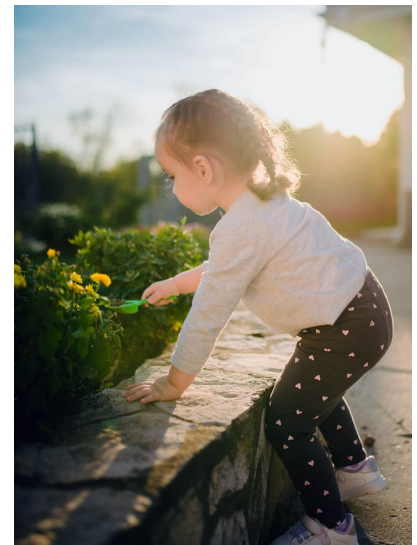
Professionals have listed some benefits of being outside including rising levels in Vitamin D, and even boosting concentration. Children with ADHD seem to focus better after being outdoors. It also can improve your mood. Researchers have found that nature makes us happy. Anxiety, depression, and anger can decrease after simply spending time outdoors. If you have a sensory oriented child, feeling the dirt in their hands or on their feet and the sun on their back can really enhance that experience for them as well.

Planting a garden also teaches your children about hard work and discipline. If they want the plants/vegetables/fruit to grow, they will have to stick with it and take care of them. Rain might be their friend some days, but they will need

watering and love for them to really bloom and prosper. If they do stick it out and put the work in, their reward will be so amazing. They will be able to see their beautiful flowers, and pick and eat their vegetables and fruit.

If you are not able to start a garden outside your home, having some indoor plants will work just as well too! You can still pick out the plants together and water them, and make sure they get plenty of sunlight. Indoor plants require hard work, and the growth can be seen on a daily basis!

Here is an article on tips for starting a garden: <https://www.miraclegro.com/en-us/library/gardening-basics/10-top-gardening-tips-beginners>. If you would like, send photos to [info@wisapsp.org](mailto:info@wisapsp.org) of your garden at any stage. We would love to hear all about it!



## **WISAPSP SPRING NEWSLETTER CONTEST: Bright Spots of Quarantine**

Well, it's now been over a year since the pandemic sent us all into lockdown mode and changed all of our lives. The downsides of the pandemic are too many to count... but there were a few silver linings to be found. Where has your family found joy during this difficult year? For our Spring Contest-- Share with us one of your family's **Bright Spots of Quarantine**. Submit your answer by May 1<sup>st</sup> to [Jessica@wisapsp.org](mailto:Jessica@wisapsp.org) or on the corresponding Facebook contest post. We'll choose one lucky winner at random from all the entries. The winner will receive a \$25 Amazon gift card! We may feature some of the answers in our next newsletter. Photos encouraged too!





Madison Adoption Foster Support Group is a thriving parent-led group based in Madison. We recently interviewed Lisa Schuster, one of the group's organizers. You can also follow the organization through their Facebook Group Page: Adoption/Foster Support Group (Madison, WI). The group is hosted by Door Creek Church, though you need not be an attendee in order to be a part of the support group.

***Please tell us about how/why/when the Adoption and Foster Support Group got started.***

Our group was started at Door Creek Church in Madison about 6 years ago. The original intent was to assess what families who were considering or already had adopted/fostered might need and to see how the church might support them or how a group might grow out of these needs.

***How has the group grown and changed over the years?***

About two years ago we started offering a variety of meetings. We meet about once a month holding family fun nights that have an activity plus open gym time, parent nights out, book-reads and we consistently connect members to other events in the area on our Facebook page.

What we found is challenging is finding activities that fit a wide range of kid's ages in one night. We have easily found activities that preschoolers to elementary kids enjoy with their parents. We have offered an open gym and a game room (pool, ping-pong) for teens. Ultimately, we have found that most of our members have younger kids.



Meeting the Author, Mariama Lockington, one of our recent Book Reads.

When we were in person we averaged about 30 people per event. Craft Nights are by far our most popular event sometimes we have 60 people attend!

***Can you tell us about some of the activities and events that you hold?***

Our family fun nights have included crafts, movies, games, cookouts and park meetings. For adults we have had walking clubs, coffee nights, book clubs and we also had many members attend an Adoptive Mom retreat together in Michigan.

***What kinds of adjustments has your group made during the pandemic?***

All of our meetings have been for parents during the pandemic. We have offered a walking club, morning coffee meet ups ( during the warmer months when we could meet outside) and recently we had two of our members hold a Zoom Meeting to share how to start a Lifebook for and with your child.

***What is your favorite thing about being a part of the Adoption and Foster Support Group? What do you think is the most important thing families gain from being part of this group?***

I enjoy leading a group and participating in a group with my family. I think for many of our families the family nights are important to them as their kids get to see other families that look like them and friendships have developed, both kids and adults. Our parent only events have been

a safe place where we can talk, share and have true understanding about what it's like to parent as an adoptive or foster parent as it is uniquely different.



Woven Conference in Michigan – many of our member moms attended together, January, 2020.

***What advice do you have for others who might want to start a similar type of group in other parts of the state?***

Finding a team of people to lead together is key, this way you can share the responsibilities of the meetings. We have always had 2-3 families who lead. Having a diverse team is great too, families who are adoptive (domestic/ international) and foster on a leadership team is beneficial.

We send a survey out once a year to learn more about how we can support and offer meetings that meet needs. This helps us to plan what parents and kids are interested in. Finding a funding source is also important. We collect donations at every family fun night to help cover the costs of pizza and activities but we have been lucky to receive support from our church (free space and free paper goods for dinners) and Wisconsin Adoption and Permanency Support has helped to fund some of our craft nights.



WISAPSP is happy to be able to offer an opportunity for individuals and families to attend this national virtual conference (at their own pace) at a greatly discounted rate - ONLY \$10! You must reside in Wisconsin in order to take advantage of this rate. [LEARN MORE OR REGISTER ONLINE](#)

and encouragement for families in their congregation and surrounding communities.



• TBRI and the Gospel  
The simulcast will also include teaching, insight and more from Show Hope Founders Mary Beth and Steven Curtis Chapman, and Show Hope Executive Director Emily Chapman Richards. Additionally, Daren Jones and Amanda Purvis from the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development at TCU will be featured.

The Hope for the Journey Conference will equip parents and caregivers meeting the everyday needs of children impacted by adoption and foster care, and further resource churches in their endeavors to be beacons of hope

Modules will include:

- An intro to TBRI (Trust Based Relational Intervention)
- Connecting Principles
- Empowering Principles
- Correcting Principles

You will be emailed a link to the online event , as well as a workbook pdf which you can print out. You will have access to the event from April 9th through May 31st, 2021.

## Mark Your Calendar for Saturday, October 30, 2021, Halloween Weekend! A Place In My Heart Conference will be back at the Wilderness in Wisconsin Dells!

This is a full day adoption-focused conference. Keynote Speaker is Bryan Post. Bryan Post is one of America's foremost child behavior experts and founder of the Post Institute for Family-Centered Therapy. The Post Institute works with adults, children and families struggling with early life trauma and the impact on the development of the mind/body system. He'll be speaking on "stress, trauma and the adopted child and showing families how to implement love based strategies for immediate impact into problem behaviors."



Check out all of our Spring Activities. To learn more about each event or to register visit [wisapsp.eventbrite.com](https://wisapsp.eventbrite.com). Below are in person events, but there are so many additional webinars and online opportunities listed in [Eventbrite](#). Be sure to check them out! Please RSVP for ALL events as notifications of any changes or cancellations will, in most cases, be sent to registrants only.

Remember-Please follow COVID-19 safety procedures. Facemasks must continue to be worn at all personally attended events.

WI Community	Activity	Date	Location	Time	Cost
Stevens Point	<a href="#">Morning Yoga</a>	4/10/2021	Plover Yoga	10:00 am	Free
La Crosse	<a href="#">Animal Adaptations</a>	4/10/2021	Myrick Park	10:00 am	Free
Wausau	<a href="#">State Park Family Day</a>	4/24/2021	Rib Mountain State Park	1:00 pm	\$5
Wausau	<a href="#">Pallet Board Painting</a>	4/24/2021	Clay Corner Studio	11:00 am	\$5
La Crosse	<a href="#">Parents Art Night</a>	5/4/2021	All Glazed Up	6:00 pm	\$5
Oshkosh	<a href="#">Educational Fun</a>	5/11/2021	Mtoxins Venom Lab	6:00 pm	\$0-\$5
Rhineland	<a href="#">Coffee Shop Talk</a>	5/15/2021	Crimson Café	9:00 am	Free
Milwaukee	<a href="#">Urban Ecology Family Scavenger Hunt</a>	5/22/2021	Urban Ecology Center	1:00 pm	Free
Marshfield	<a href="#">Zoo Day</a>	6/5/2021	Wildwood Zoo	11:00 am	Free
Janesville	<a href="#">Rotary Botanical Gardens</a>	6/6/2021	Rotary Botanical Gardens	12:00 pm	\$5/family
Eau Claire	<a href="#">Summer Kickoff: Family Craft in the Park</a>	6/18/2021	Rod & Gun Park	3:00 pm	Free
Eau Claire	<a href="#">Family Pool Party</a>	7/23/2021	Fairfax Pool	7:00 pm	Free



# Virtual Support Groups

WWW.WISAPSP.ORG



WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US FOR ONE OF OUR ONGOING VIRTUAL GROUPS THAT  
MEET REGULARLY VIA ZOOM!

*CLICK ON EVENT TITLES TO REGISTER OR FOR MORE DETAILS*

## Parents of Older Youth & Teens

Join other adoptive & guardianship caregivers with children in middle/upper grades for a live, video check-in to socially connect and discuss topics related to adoption.

## Caregivers of Younger Children

This is a support group for adoptive/kinship/guardianship caregivers of kiddos that are infants/toddlers until 5th grade! We will meet via zoom and talk about anything on your mind, as well as share resources and information with each other.

## Birth Parent Support

An online support group for birth parents who have a child who was placed for adoption. This is a wonderful way to connect with others with a shared experience. This group is facilitated by a birth parent.

## Waiting to Adopt

A space for Wisconsin parents or parents-to-be that are awaiting the adoption or placement of their child to connect with one another, ask questions and to share concerns and excitement.

## KINnect Relative Caregivers - Morning

Please join us for an online group for relative caregivers across Wisconsin. We will share the daily joys and challenges of being a relative caregiver of children.

## KINnect Relative Caregivers - Evening

A monthly virtual support group for relative caregivers in Wisconsin. Please join us for this opportunity to connect with other parents and grandparents as a way to share the joys and challenges of being a relative caregiver of children.

## Single Parent Support








An online support group for single adoptive and guardianship parents. This group will meet via Zoom on the 4th Tuesday of every month and will be facilitated by Heather Hansen. Join the conversation!

## Adult Adoptees

Connect with other adult adoptees from around Wisconsin. This will be a space for discussing your adoption experiences with others who "get it", as well as for just getting to know one another and talking about life. This group is facilitated by an adult adoptee.



The Wisconsin Adoption & Permanency Support Staff are available to assist you! Please feel free to contact them if you are interested in an event, have a creative event idea, or would love to learn more about local resources. They are here to serve you and your family! They would love to hear from you!

Name	Service Area	Email	Phone
 Lydia Deering	Eau Claire & Surrounding Area and Far Northern Region	<a href="mailto:lydia@wisapsp.org">lydia@wisapsp.org</a>	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 1
 Heather Hansen	Green Bay & Surrounding Area	<a href="mailto:heather@wisapsp.org">heather@wisapsp.org</a>	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 2
 Susan McParker	La Crosse & Surrounding Area	<a href="mailto:susan@wisapsp.org">susan@wisapsp.org</a>	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 3
 Jessica Wright	Madison & Surrounding area	<a href="mailto:jessica@wisapsp.org">jessica@wisapsp.org</a>	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 4
 Pattie Godsell	Milwaukee & Surrounding Area	<a href="mailto:pattie@wisapsp.org">pattie@wisapsp.org</a>	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 5
 Christy Timm	Milwaukee & Surrounding Area	<a href="mailto:christyt@wisapsp.org">christyt@wisapsp.org</a>	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 5
 Chelsey Zommers	Wausau & Surrounding Area	<a href="mailto:chelsey@wisapsp.org">chelsey@wisapsp.org</a>	833-WIS-APSP Ext. 6

Check out the upcoming family fun events co-sponsored by Jockey Being Family!



**JOCKEY**  
BEING FAMILY.



WI Community	Activity	Date	Location	Time	Cost
Appleton	<a href="#">Timber Rattlers! Baseball</a>	5/23/2021	WI Timber Rattlers	1:05 pm	Free
Minocqua	<a href="#">Family Mini Golf</a>	6/26/2021	Settlers Mill	11:00 am	\$5
Franklin	<a href="#">Take Me Out to the Ball Game</a>	6/26/2021	The Rock Sports Complex	6:00 pm	Free
Onalaska	<a href="#">Family Fun Day</a>	7/10/2021	Clearwater Farm	1:00 pm	\$5
Eau Claire	<a href="#">Family Outing: Eau Claire Express Game</a>	7/17/2021	Carson Park	6:30 pm	Free
Green Bay	<a href="#">Family Fun at Bay Beach</a>	8/21/2021	Bay Beach Amusement	10:00 am	Free